

NUTRITION NEWS

WRITTEN BY: SHANNON DAVIS, RD, CDN

LAYOUT BY: REGINA PIZZO

Diabetes

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November is American Diabetes Month. Did you know that over 38 million Americans are diabetic? This equates to almost 12% of the population! Diabetes can be classified into two types. Type I diabetes includes juvenile onset diabetes and is most often treated with insulin. Type II diabetes is associated with onset as an adult and is thought to be linked to obesity and lifestyle factors. Type II is the most common form of diabetes.

All forms of diabetes are marked by an ability of the body to regulate blood sugar levels. In non-diabetic individuals, the pancreas releases the hormone insulin, which keeps your blood sugar level steady. Type II diabetics often develop insulin resistance, where the body does not use insulin properly. At first, the pancreas may begin to make extra insulin to make up for the body's resistance, but most often it cannot continue to make enough insulin to keep your blood sugar at a normal level.

Sometimes, the body does produce adequate insulin but the insulin is

not able to enter the body's cells. There is a link between obesity and diabetes, and one of the theories is that as the fat tissue expands, it causes insulin resistance. If the insulin cannot reach the targeted cells, blood sugar levels rise.

As obesity continues to rise in America, so do the cases of Type II diabetes. Type II is no longer referred to as adult onset diabetes because of the prevalence of diabetes being seen in overweight and obese children. Simply lifestyle changes can often "cure" diabetes. Sometimes, a weight loss of as little as 10 to 20 pounds can have a profound impact on maintaining healthy blood sugar levels.



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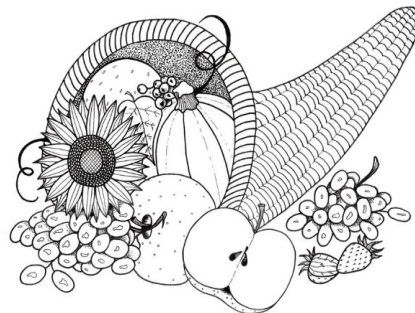
Although researchers do not fully understand why some people develop diabetes and others do not, it is evident that certain factors obviously increase the risk.

- ◆ **Weight:** being overweight is a primary risk factor for type II diabetes. The more fatty tissue you have, the more resistant your cells become to insulin. However, you don't have to be overweight to develop type 2 diabetes.
- ◆ **Fat Distribution:** if your body stores fat primarily in your abdomen, your risk of type 2 diabetes is greater than if your body stores fat elsewhere, such as your hips or thighs.
- ◆ **Inactivity:** the less active you are, the greater your risk of type 2 diabetes. Physical activity helps you control your weight, uses up glucose as energy, and makes your cells more sensitive to insulin.
- ◆ **Family History:** the risk of type 2 diabetes increases if your parent or sibling has the disease.
- ◆ **Race:** although it is unclear why, people of certain races including African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, and Asian Americans are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes.
- ◆ **Age:** the risk of type 2 diabetes increases as you get older, especially after age 45.



How do you know if you have diabetes? The only way to confirm a diagnosis is to have your blood glucose levels checked. However, there are certain symptoms that can lead your physician to perform the appropriate laboratory tests. These symptoms include:

- * **Increased thirst and frequent urination:** excess sugar building up in your bloodstream causes fluid to be pulled from the tissues. This may leave you thirsty. As a result, you may drink and urinate more than usual.
- * **Increased hunger:** without enough insulin to move sugar into your cells, your muscles and organs become depleted of energy, which can trigger intense hunger.
- * **Weight loss:** despite eating more than usual, you may lose weight. Without the ability to metabolize glucose, the body uses alternative fuels stored in muscle and fat. Calories are lost as excess glucose is released in the urine.
- * **Fatigue:** if your cells are deprived of sugar, you may become tired and irritable.
- * **Blurred Vision:** if your blood sugar is too high, fluid may be pulled from the lenses of your eyes. This may affect your ability to focus.
- * **Slow healing sores or frequent infections:** type 2 diabetes affects your ability to heal and resist infections.



There are a number of different treatment options for type 2 diabetes. Generally speaking, your physician may first recommend that you lose weight if you are overweight. This may help to control your blood sugar levels enough that medication need not be added.

If you do need medication, most individuals are prescribed an oral agent first. These are a number of different oral medications used to treat diabetes, including metformin, glyburide, actos, glipizide, and Januvia.

If your blood sugar levels are still uncontrolled, you may be prescribed insulin. Insulin is administered via injection and comes in various forms, including long and short acting categories. Intakes and blood sugars need to be closely monitored while on insulin, as the risk of an episode of hypoglycemia (or low blood sugar) can occur. It is important to be aware of the signs and symptoms of low blood sugar, including dizziness, sweating, light headedness, cold and clammy hands, shakiness, and confusion.

Regardless of which path of treatment is chosen, your doctor will most likely recommend a dietary component, such as limiting your carbohydrate intake. Carbohydrates are found in starchy foods, fruit, and dairy products and are responsible for raising your blood sugar. While it is important to incorporate carbohydrates into your diet, you may need to plan your day so that the carbohydrates are spaced evenly throughout your meals.

To figure out how much carbohydrate a food has in it, you must also pay close attention to the recommended serving sizes. The following is a list of common carbohydrate rich foods and how much of each food is considered one serving.

- ◆ Fruit: one apple, one pear, etc. or 1/2 cup canned fruit (exception: one banana is considered two servings of carbohydrate due to its density)

- ◆ Milk/Milk products: one cup (8 oz)
- ◆ Potatoes: 1/2 cup cooked
- ◆ Pasta: 1/2 cup cooked
- ◆ Bread: 1 slice
- ◆ Hot cereal: 1/2 cup cooked
- ◆ Cold cereal: 3/4 cup

Here are a few additional diet tips for keeping your blood sugars steady.

- * Plan today for tomorrow— meal planning takes time but is helpful in maintaining healthy blood sugar levels
- * Eat regularly— have carbs about every 4 hours to prevent ravenous hunger and hence overeating
- * Carry snacks along— crackers, pretzels, and fruits are quick, easy snacks to keep with you in case your blood sugar drops too low
- * Trade off— if you eat a lot of starchy foods at one meal, cut back at the next meal

When planning your diet, remember that you don't always need to change the type of food you eat. Eating an appropriate portion size of a "regular" food (vs. a "diabetic" option) is also acceptable. And also be mindful of including adequate protein intake. While carbs raise your blood sugar, protein will help stabilize and maintain your blood sugar at a reasonable level.



Herkimer County Office for the Aging

We are here to assist you with options

Call our office 315-867-1121

for a list of local **Food Pantries** and

Cost Saving programs

Or visit our

website: herkimercountyny.gov

Departments –Office for the Aging

HEAP

November 3, 2025—April 7, 2026

(315) 867-1195

<u>Household size</u>	<u>Gross Income</u>
1	\$3,473
2	\$4,542
3	\$5,611

**Call the HEAP office for an applica-
tion if you have not received one
in the mail and would like to apply
for HEAP 315 867-1195**



109 Mary Street, Suite 1101

Herkimer, NY 13350

Phone: 315-867-1195

Fax: 315-867-1448

E-mail: hcofa@herkimercountyny.gov

Web: www.herkimercountyny.gov

Avocado Salad

8 roma (plum) tomatoes, diced

3 jalapeno peppers, seeded and diced

3 bunches green onion, sliced

**4 ounces crumbled garlic and herb feta
cheese**

4 avocados– peeled, pitted, and diced

2 tbs fresh lemon juice

3 bunches cilantro, chopped

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

**Combine tomatoes, jalapeno peppers,
green onion, and feta cheese in a large
bowl; toss together. Add diced avocado,
drizzle lemon juice over avocado to keep it
from turning brown. Stir in cilantro. Sea-
son with salt and pepper. Mix well and
serve.**

MONTHLY EXERCISE

Dragon Wags its tail

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.

Slightly bend your ankles and knees.

Bring your palms together in front of you

at navel height. Lengthen you spine and

gently arch your waist, Head, and neck to

the right. Rotate your thumbs and arms to

the right as well. Feel a stretch along your

entire left side. Pause for a moment and

return to the center. Then, gently arch to

the left, feeling the stretch on your right

side. Repeat the process about 10 times.